

HOUSE RESOLUTION 7007 of the First Extraordinary Session

By Clemmons

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend Coach Tim Corbin and the Vanderbilt Commodores upon winning the 2019 NCAA College World Series.

WHEREAS, this legislative body is pleased to honor and commend those extraordinary athletic teams that, through their magnificent exploits, bring honor to the State of Tennessee and serve as exceptional ambassadors of this State; and

WHEREAS, the Commodores of Vanderbilt University recently completed the greatest season in the history of the university's baseball program as the team captured the 2019 College World Series to win the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Baseball Championship; and

WHEREAS, led by Coach Tim Corbin, the Vandy Boys won their second national championship as they defeated the Michigan Wolverines 8-2 at TD Ameritrade Park in Omaha, Nebraska, on June 26, 2019; and

WHEREAS, the Vandy Boys' quality pitching and high-powered offense conquered and prevailed over every foe as they also captured both the Southeastern Conference (SEC) regular season and tournament titles for the first time since 2007, becoming the first SEC team to defeat every other SEC team at least once in the same season; and

WHEREAS, the Commodores routinely sank their opponents' best efforts this season, leading the nation in home runs (100), hits (770), and batters struck out (765) and the SEC in slugging percentage (.514), on-base percentage (.412), runs scored (578), runs batted in (541), and saves (32) while setting a new SEC record for total wins as they finished the season with a record of 59 wins and only 12 losses; and

WHEREAS, starting the 2019 college baseball season ranked as the top team in the nation, Vanderbilt claimed the SEC conference regular season title before traveling to Hoover, Alabama, the longtime home of the SEC tournament, where the Commodores defeated Auburn, Mississippi State, and LSU to advance undefeated to the championship game against Ole Miss; and

WHEREAS, in an amazing display of tenacity and a deeply rooted belief in their ability to overcome any obstacle placed in their way, the Vandy Boys were behind 6-0 at the end of the first inning but valiantly rallied for an unbelievable 11-10 victory as Philip Clarke hit a walk-off single in the bottom of the ninth with the bases loaded and two outs to drive in the winning run; and

WHEREAS, Vanderbilt's J.J. Bleday was named the SEC Tournament Most Valuable Player and a member of the All-Tournament team along with Commodore teammate Pat DeMarco; and

WHEREAS, the newly crowned SEC champions were slotted as the number two overall national seed for the NCAA baseball tournament and hosted a regional tournament at Hawkins Field, where they bombarded Ohio State and Indiana State, advancing to the Super Regional round to face the Blue Devils of Duke University; and

WHEREAS, Vandy senior Julian Infante was named Most Valuable Player for the Nashville Regional tournament and was joined on the all-tournament team by fellow Commodores Austin Martin, Kumar Rocker, and Drake Fellows; and

WHEREAS, losing for just the second time in twenty-seven games, the Vandy Boys dropped the first game of the Super Regional against Duke and faced elimination, needing a win to continue their fight to advance to the College World Series in Omaha; and

WHEREAS, pitching perhaps the greatest game in college baseball history, Kumar Rocker, a freshman, threw a no-hitter, the first in NCAA Super Regional history, striking out nineteen and silencing the Blue Devil bats, that just the day before, had pounded out eighteen runs against the Commodores; and

WHEREAS, having reset their course with Rocker's dominating performance, the Vandy Boys set sail for Omaha after sinking Duke in the final game, 13-2, and earning the right to participate in the program's fourth College World Series; and

WHEREAS, bracketed with Louisville, Mississippi State, and Auburn, Vanderbilt took no prisoners as the Vandy Boys' batting lineup of Austin Martin, J.J. Bleday, Ethan Paul, Philip Clarke, Pat DeMarco, Stephen Scott, Harrison Ray, Ty Duvall, and Julian Infante and starting pitching rotation of Drake Fellows, Kumar Rocker, and Mason Hickman torpedoed the competition in three straight games; and

WHEREAS, the Vanderbilt Commodores advanced to the College World Series finals to face the University of Michigan Wolverines led by Head Coach Erik Bakich, a former assistant coach at Vanderbilt under Coach Tim Corbin; and

WHEREAS, once again, the Vandy Boys dropped the first game of the series and had their backs against the wall as Kumar Rocker took the mound for the second game, where he and his teammates stood fast, exuding an attitude of "not today" as he struck out eleven and combined with closer Tyler Brown to post a 4-1 victory over the Wolverines and force a winner-take-all final game; and

WHEREAS, securing their national championship with an 8-2 win, the Vandy Boys proved that they are a team and a program for the ages by once again rallying to overcome a first inning deficit as Pat DeMarco launched a game-tying home run, a crew of Commodores got key hits, and starting pitcher Mason Hickman struck out ten before handing the ball to reliever Jake Eder who struck out four more batters in the final three innings; and

WHEREAS, with the victory, a sea of gold Vanderbilt Commodores descended on the baseball diamond as they clinched their second NCAA College World Series championship and became the first top-two national seed to capture the national championship since 2001; and

WHEREAS, Vanderbilt's remarkable championship performance in Omaha earned the team's players several individual accolades: J.J. Bleday, Philip Clarke, Austin Martin, and Kumar Rocker were deservedly named to the College World Series All-Tournament team; and

WHEREAS, Commodore Kumar Rocker's dominating performances on the mound won him selection as the 2019 College World Series Most Outstanding Player, as he recorded two

wins with a 1.46 earned run average while striking out seventeen batters in 12 1/3 innings, including eleven strikeouts against Michigan in Game 2 of the finals; and

WHEREAS, the members of the 2019 National Champion Vanderbilt Commodores baseball team are Harrison Ray, Cooper Davis, Philip Clarke, Tate Kolwyck, Isaiah Thomas, Makenzie Stills, Ethan Paul, Matt Hogan, Dominic Keegan, Kiambu Fentress, Austin Martin, Walker Grisanti, Pat DeMarco, Stephen Scott, Ty Duvall, Tyler Brown, Julian Infante, Michael Sandborn, Ethan Smith, Cam McMillan, Patrick Raby, Sterling Hayes, Justin Willis, Hugh Fisher, Erik Kaiser, Zach King, Jackson Gillis, John Malcom, Jake Eder, Justyn-Henry Malloy, Austin Becker, Mason Hickman, Chance Huff, A.J. Franklin, Luke Murphy, J.J. Bleday, Joe Gobillot, Drake Fellows, Kumar Rocker, and Jayson Gonzalez; and

WHEREAS, in fulfilling their dreams of a national championship after four years at Vanderbilt, the senior members of the Vandy Boys completed a voyage they began with their teammate the late Donny Everett, whose parents Teddy and Susan Everett are part of the Vanderbilt baseball family and were most appropriately invited by the team on stage in Omaha to share in the celebration; and

WHEREAS, a total of eight Commodores have received recognition as All-Americans by six organizations, including J.J. Bleday, Tyler Brown, Philip Clarke, Drake Fellows, Austin Martin, Ethan Paul, Patrick Raby, and Kumar Rocker; and

WHEREAS, the 2019 college baseball home run leader, J.J. Bleday was named SEC Player of the Year and joined fellow Commodores Philip Clarke, Tyler Brown, and Austin Martin on the All-SEC First Team; as Kumar Rocker was named to the SEC All-Freshmen Team; and Austin Martin and Julian Infante were named to the SEC All-Defensive Team; and

WHEREAS, since 2003, the Commodores have been led by a true legend, Head Coach Tim Corbin, who has built a college baseball program that is second to none, having dedicated himself to the molding of these student athletes into remarkable young men as well as exemplary baseball players; and

WHEREAS, the 2019 SEC Coach of the Year, Coach Tim Corbin was also fittingly honored as the National Coach of the Year by the American Baseball Coaches Association and

Collegiate Baseball; he has led Vanderbilt to fifteen NCAA tournaments, nine Super Regionals, and four College World Series while posting a 740-354-1 record at Vandy; and

WHEREAS, in addition to Coach Tim Corbin, the Vandy Boys enjoy the commitment to excellence and support of Associate Head Coach Scott Brown, Assistant Coach Mike Baxter, Volunteer Assistant Coach David Macias, Athletic Trainer Tracy Campbell, Strength and Conditioning Coach Chris Ham, Director of Baseball Operations Brooks Webb, Director of Player Development Brandon Barak, Video Coordinator Josh Ruchotzke, Equipment Manager Kevin Collins, Administrative Assistant Casey Stangel, and Student Managers Jack Goodrum, Chase Casali, Jackson Kelley, and Ethan Stern; and

WHEREAS, the success and national prominence of the Vanderbilt University baseball program is also a tribute to the late David Williams II, who, during his meritorious tenure as Vice Chancellor for Athletics and University Affairs and Athletics Director for Vanderbilt University, worked tirelessly to ensure that Commodore student athletes received a world-class education and the opportunity to attain the pinnacle of collegiate athletic competition; and

WHEREAS, the members of this legislative body and Commodore Nation take great pride in honoring this extraordinary group of young men who have indelibly written their names for all time into the annals of the College World Series as National Champions; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, that we honor and congratulate Coach Tim Corbin and the Vanderbilt University Commodores upon winning the 2019 NCAA College World Series and extend to them our best wishes for every future success.
Anchor Down!

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that appropriate copies of this resolution be prepared for presentation to each of the above-named persons with this final clause omitted from such copies.